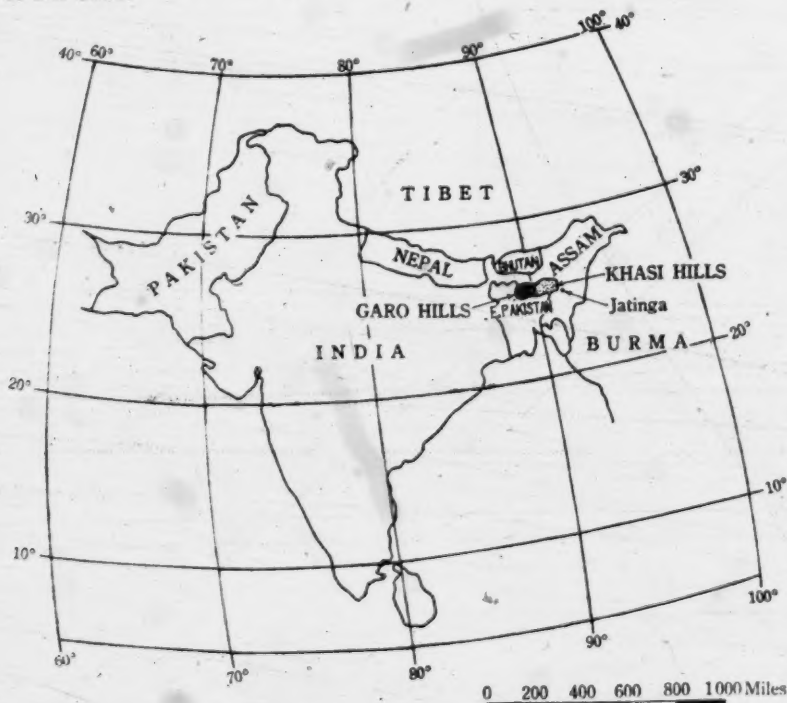


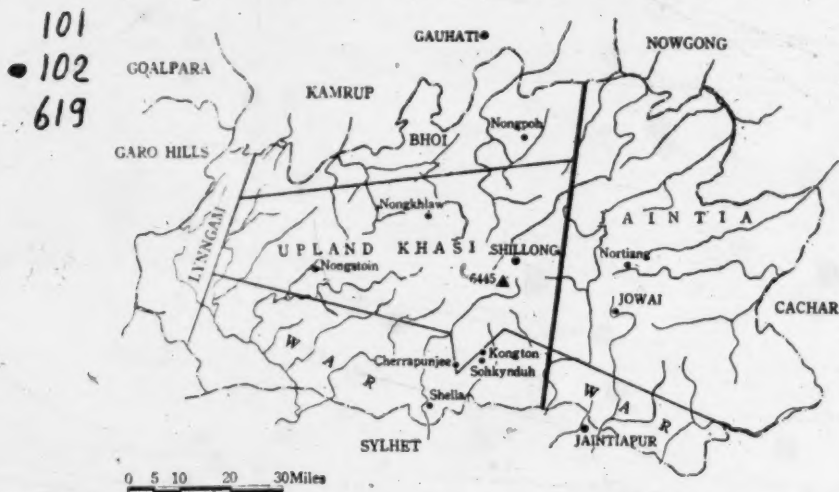
PREFACE

The purpose of this monograph is to present theoretical problems of Garo and Khasi social organization in relation to those of other matrilineal systems. In fact, the study of these two matrilineal systems has led me to enquire into many other matrilineal systems, as will appear throughout my discussion in Parts I and II. As a result, I think I have reached certain conclusions of theoretical interest concerning matrilineal systems as a whole; these are presented in the last part of the book.



MAP I. — Location of the Garo Hills and the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.

- 133 the highest point is the Shillong Peak, 6,445 feet, covered with scrub, grassland and forests (mostly oak, rhododendron and pine trees). The
- 137 Jaintia Hills are considerably lower, with much flat land; wet paddy cultivation is practised here and there where sufficient water is available. From the plateau of the Khasi Hills northwards to the Assam Brahmaputra Valley there is a gentle slope covered with thick jungle, and the southern slope towards the Bengal plain is very steep, so that



MAP. 8. — Map of the Khasi-Jaintia Hills with Classification of Groups.

- 133 the upland remained practically cut off from the plains until the
- 137 middle of the 19th century.

619 Following the geographical and ecological differences, the five groups are segregated into fairly well-defined cultural areas, each developing a different economy and dialect:

[131]
[24]

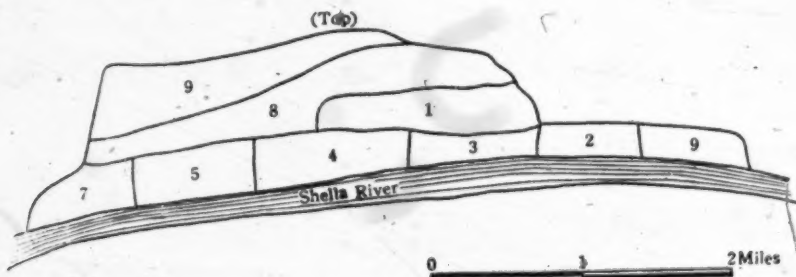
1. The Jaintia¹ — associated mostly with wet rice cultivation.
2. The Khasi (upland Khasi) — practise potato cultivation with small-scale rice and maize cultivation.
3. The War — inhabit the southern slope of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills (they are called geographically the Khasi War and the Jaintia War). Due to the heavy rainfall, the soil is the most fertile in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. The Khasi War practise jhuming of which the main yield is millet. In the lower part of this area, pan-leaf, betel-nut, and orange gardens are cultivated. The Jaintia War practise wet rice cultivation like most of the Jaintias, as well as pan-leaf cultivation.

1. They are called also the Synteng or the Pnar.

[Shella]

- 621 (7) Mawrongkhong, (8) Rynsong-kanor, and (9) Sholap, as shown in Map 9.
 103 In Shella village the number of households in each section ranges between 10
 614 and 80. Such a section is called *kher*, and was supposed to be the site of house-
 621 holds of segments of every *kur* (clan). It seems that Shella village was once
 178 composed of nine different *kur* which could intermarry with each other. However,
 731 nowadays, each section, as appeared in my census, has nothing to do with the
kur as such; it is simply a geographical section. According to the information
 which I gathered, there had been a tendency for the same *kur* people to gather
 within the section, before the great earthquake in 1897 brought considerable

• [102]



MAP 9. — Distribution of Sections in Shella Village.

damages and death to this area: many of them left the village at the time and
 many houses changed their sites in the village when they were reconstructed.
 For instance, the composition of Jasir section in January 1956 was as follows:

Name of <i>kur</i>	Number of houses	Name of <i>kur</i>	Number of houses
1. Yuchyne	7	9. Lyngdoh	1
2. Iunei	4	10. Riang	1
3. Lorit	4	11. Nongtathiang ...	1
4. Synren	3	12. Loki	1
5. Ksaieng	3	13. Kanto	1
6. Nongbri	3	14. Kanti	1
7. Siem	2	15. Khelwa	1
8. Iunoi	2	16. ?	5
		Total	40

178 The people said that in Jasir, the Yuchyne was the most influential *kur*,
 621 and must have been the original *kur* in this section. However, no clan solidarity
 614 could be observed. These seven households were socially and economically
 quite independent of each other, as are all other households. As a whole, the
 importance of *kur* diminished a great deal in this village. Five households in
 Jasir were reluctant to mention their *kur*; some of them did not care about
 their *kur*; others were not themselves certain to which *kur* they belonged. The
kur is losing its function to a great extent. This can be ascribed to the high
 degree of sophistication and mobility. However, except for one Siem woman
 who came from the uplands and married a man of this village, all 15 *kur* mention-
 ed above are local clans frequently found within the Shella Confederacy. In
 621 this area also community endogamy was predominant. Perhaps the Shella